

## Annual Cleanup Reaches Farther than American River

Multiple efforts to take place in Placer County

**By Amber Marra, Journal Staff Writer / Sept. 14, 2012**

This weekend, volunteers will descend upon the confluence of the north and middle forks of the American River in an effort to clean up waterways that extend to more than 20 rivers and lakes in California.

Eric Peach, conservation chairman for Protect American River Canyons, is expecting around 100 volunteers with this year's cleanup effort. This year's river cleanup begins at the confluence area in the Auburn State Recreation Area and will last from 8 a.m. to noon.

"It's just a few people who mess it up and we all pay the price for their bad habits," Peach said.

Other local groups holding river cleanup efforts under the North Fork American River Alliance include the Placer Land Trust in the Roseville and Rocklin Areas, the Upper American River Foundation in Colfax and the South Yuba River Citizens League in Grass Valley and Nevada City.

This year one volunteer with Protect American River Canyons is rallying to be there. Rex Maynard was recently in a mountain bike accident that resulted in broken bones and a neck injury, but that won't stop him from being there on Saturday to help out.

Peach and Maynard both remember in recent years when more than just cans and bottles were pulled from the river. One year they had to enlist the services of a helicopter to pull a car out of the river piece by piece.

"I'm going to come down for the day. I won't be cutting up cars or any of that other stuff, but I'll be down here helping out and taking it easy," Maynard said. "I just like coming down here. It's my favorite place on planet Earth and I like taking care of it."

Peach said there have been river cleanup efforts for years, but recently Protect American River Canyons and other local groups have teamed up with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy for the Great Sierra River Cleanup.

Brittany Juergenson, event coordinator with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, said there are 95 different cleanup sites covering 23 rivers and lakes throughout 22 counties during this Saturday's river cleanup.

In the last three years, volunteers throughout the cleanup area have removed 526 tons of trash and recyclables, including everything from appliances to cigarette butts to baby diapers and tires.

Juergenson said since the cleanup efforts came together under the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Peach and other leaders with the North Fork American River Alliance have helped organize.

"In Auburn they've been hosting cleanups for years and years and years, so they've been our support system for helping get some of the newer groups started and have really relied on their knowledge," Juergenson said.

Peach said all parking and day-use fees at the confluence area will not be enforced on Saturday during the river cleanup. Volunteers that get to the confluence early will receive new trail maps of the American River area. Cleaning up under the Foresthill Bridge has always been an adventure, as everything from motor cycles and skidoos have been found after drivers participate in what Peach calls "sport dumping."

For more information on this weekend's cleanup or to find a cleanup effort in your area, search "Sierra Cleanup Map" on Google for contact information for local participating groups.

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